

## **Appendix A: The Financing of the 9/11 Plot**

This appendix provides additional detail on the funding of the 9/11 plot itself and how the Commission staff investigated the plot financing.

### ***Staff Investigation of the 9/11 Plot***

The staff's investigation of the 9/11 plot built on the extensive investigations conducted by the U.S. government, particularly the FBI. The government thoroughly examined the plot's financial transactions, and the Commission staff had neither the need nor the resources to duplicate that work. Rather, the staff independently assessed the earlier investigation. We had access to the actual evidence of the plotters' financial transactions, including U.S. and foreign bank account statements, fund transfer records, and other financial records. We also had access to the FBI's extensive work product, including analyses, financial spreadsheets and timelines, and relevant summaries of interviews with witnesses, such as bank tellers, money exchange operators and others with knowledge of the conspirators' financial dealings. We were briefed by and formally interviewed the FBI agents who led the plot-financing investigation, sometimes more than once.

In addition to the FBI, we met with key people from other agencies, including the CIA and the Financial Crimes Enforcement Network (FinCEN), who had relevant knowledge about the plot financing. Commission staff also interviewed law enforcement officials from other countries who had investigated the 9/11 plot, reviewed investigative materials from other countries, and interviewed relevant private-sector witnesses. Finally, the staff regularly received relevant reports on the interrogations of the plot participants now in custody.

### ***Financing of the Plot***

To plan and conduct their attack, the 9/11 plotters spent somewhere between \$400,000 and \$500,000, the vast majority of which was provided by al Qaeda. Although the origin of the funds remains unknown, extensive investigation has revealed quite a bit about the financial transactions that supported the 9/11 plot. The hijackers and their financial facilitators used the anonymity provided by the huge international and domestic financial system to move and store their money through a series of unremarkable transactions. The existing mechanisms to prevent abuse of the financial system did not fail. They were never designed to detect or disrupt transactions of the type that financed 9/11.

### ***Financing of the hijackers before they arrived in the United States***

Al Qaeda absorbed costs related to the plot before the hijackers arrived in the United States, although our knowledge of the funding during this period remains somewhat murky. According to plot leader Khalid Sheikh Muhammad (KSM), the Hamburg cell members (Muhamad Atta, Marwan al Shehhi, Ziad Jarrah, and Ramzi Binalshibh) each received \$5,000 to pay for their return from Afghanistan to Germany in late 1999 or early 2000, after they had been selected to join the plot, and the three Hamburg pilots also received additional funds for travel from Germany to the United States. Once the nonpilot muscle hijackers received their training, each received \$2,000 to travel to Saudi Arabia to obtain new passports and visas, and ultimately \$10,000 to facilitate travel to the United States, according to KSM.<sup>143</sup>

We have found no evidence that the Hamburg cell members received funds from al Qaeda earlier than late 1999. Before then, they appear to have supported themselves. For example, Shehhi was being paid by the UAE military, which was sponsoring his studies in Germany. He continued to receive a salary through December 23, 2000. The funds were deposited into his bank account in the United Arab Emirates and then wired by his brother, who held power of attorney over the account, to his account at Dresdner Bank in Germany (although there is no evidence that al-Shehhi's brother knew about or supported the plot).<sup>144</sup> Binalshibh was employed intermittently in Germany until November 1999. Jarrah apparently relied on his family for support. Indeed, Binalshibh said that Jarrah always seemed to have plenty of money in Germany because his parents gave it to him.

Notwithstanding persistent press reports to the contrary, there is no evidence that the Spanish al Qaeda cell, led by Barkat Yarkas and including al Qaeda European financier Mohammed Galeb Kalaje Zouaydi, provided any funding to support 9/11 or the Hamburg plotters. Zouaydi may have provided funds to Mamoun Darkazanli, who knew the Hamburg plotters as a result of being a member of the Hamburg Muslim community, but there is no evidence that he provided money to the plot participants or that any of his funds were used to support the plot.

Mounir Motassadeq, the Hamburg friend of the hijackers, held power of attorney over Shehhi's Dresdner Bank account, from November 24, 1999, until at least January 2001. Motassadeq told the German investigators that he held the power of attorney to handle routine payments—for rent, tuition, and the like—for Shehhi when he traveled to his homeland. On one occasion he transferred DM 5,000 from Shehhi's account to Binalshibh's account while they were both out of town. Motassadeq's role in managing Shehhi's account was part of the conduct that led to his conviction in Germany for complicity in 9/11, a conviction that was subsequently reversed.

Al Qaeda also paid for the training camps at which the 9/11 hijackers were selected and trained. We have not considered this expense as part of the plot costs, because the camps

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<sup>143</sup> Another person, who operated a safehouse in Pakistan through which the hijackers transited, independently recalled that an al Qaeda courier provided at least one hijacker with \$10,000 at KSM's direction.

<sup>144</sup> Al-Shehhi's last payment, received in December 2000, does not appear to have been moved to his account in Germany.

existed independently of the plot. The marginal cost of training the hijackers is a plot cost, but any estimate of it would be little more than a guess.

### ***Financing of hijackers in the United States***

The best available evidence indicates that approximately \$300,000 was deposited into the hijackers' bank accounts in the United States by a variety of means. Just prior to the flights, the hijackers returned about \$26,000 to one of their al Qaeda facilitators and attempted to return another \$10,000, which was intercepted by the FBI after 9/11. Their primary expenses consisted of tuition for flight training, living expenses (room, board and meals, vehicles, insurance, etc.), and travel (for casing flights, meetings, and the September 11 flights themselves). The FBI believes that the funds in the bank accounts held by the hijackers were sufficient to cover their expenses.<sup>145</sup> The FBI, therefore, believes it has identified all sources of funding. Our investigation has revealed nothing to suggest the contrary, although it is possible that the \$300,000 estimate omits some cash that the hijackers brought into the United States and spent without depositing into a bank account or otherwise creating a record.<sup>146</sup>

Al Qaeda funded the hijackers in the United States by three primary and unexceptional means: (1) wire or bank-to-bank transfers from overseas to the United States, (2) the physical transportation of cash or traveler's checks into the United States, and (3) the use of debit or credit cards to access funds held in foreign financial institutions. Once here, all the hijackers used the U.S. banking system to store their funds and facilitate their transactions.

The hijackers received assistance in financing their activities from two facilitators based in the United Arab Emirates: Ali Abdul Aziz Ali, a.k.a. Ammar al Baluchi (Ali), and Mustafa al Hawsawi. To a lesser extent, Binalshibh helped fund the plot from Germany.

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<sup>145</sup> FBI Assistant Director, Counterterrorism Division, John S. Pistole, stated during a congressional hearing last fall that "the 9/11 hijackers utilized slightly over \$300,000 through formal banking channels to facilitate their time in the U.S. We assess they used another \$200-\$300,000 in cash to pay for living expenses . . ." Senate Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs, September 25, 2003, FDCH Political Transcripts at page 5. His statement concerning additional cash was apparently made in error. The FBI personnel most familiar with the 9-11 investigation have uniformly disagreed with it, and the FBI has never conducted any financial analysis that supports it. Although some FBI personnel involved in the early days of the investigation after 9/11 believed the hijackers had substantially more cash than that which was deposited in their accounts, the FBI view after more thorough investigation is to the contrary.

<sup>146</sup> We will never know the exact amount of funds the hijackers deposited into their accounts, as they made transactions which made it difficult to trace the money. For example, at times they made substantial cash withdrawals, followed by substantial cash deposits. It is impossible to tell if the deposit reflected new funds or merely the return of funds previously withdrawn but not spent. Nor is a complete analysis of their expenditures possible. They conducted many transactions in cash. Although the FBI has obtained evidence of many these transactions, there surely were many others of which no record exists. Additionally, gaps remain in our understanding of what exactly the hijackers did in U.S., so it is possible that they spent funds on activities of which we have no knowledge. Because the hijackers' activities and expenses are not fully known, we cannot say with certainty that every dollar has been accounted for. We believe, however, that the identified funding was sufficient to cover their known expenses and the other expenses they surely incurred in connection with their known activities.

## Wire transfers

Upon their arrival in the United States, the hijackers received a total of approximately \$130,000 from overseas facilitators via wire or bank-to-bank transfers. Most of the transfers originated from the Persian Gulf financial center of Dubai, UAE, and were sent by plot facilitator Ali. Ali is the nephew of KSM, the plot's leader, and his sister is married to convicted terrorist Ramzi Yousef. He lived in the UAE for several years before the September 11 attacks, working for a computer wholesaler in a free trade zone in Dubai. According to Ali, KSM gave him the assignment and provided him with some of the necessary funds at a meeting in Pakistan in early 2000. KSM provided the bulk of the money later in 2000 via a courier.<sup>147</sup> Although Ali had two bank accounts in the UAE, he kept most of the funds for the hijackers in a laundry bag at home.<sup>148</sup>

Ali transferred a total of \$119,500 to the hijackers in the United States in six transactions between April 16, 2000, and September 17, 2000. Nawaf al Hazmi and Khalid al Mihdhar, the first hijackers to arrive, received the first wire transfer. On April 16, 2000, Ali, using the name "Mr. Ali," wired \$5,000 from the Wall Street Exchange Centre in Dubai to an account at the Union Bank of California. The funds flowed through a correspondent account at the Royal Bank of Canada. Ali brought the \$5,000 to the Exchange Center in cash. The Wall Street Exchange Center required identification, and it made a copy of Ali's work ID, along with his cell phone number and work address—all of which helped the FBI identify him and his subsequent aliases after 9/11. Ali wired the money to the account of a San Diego resident whom Hazmi met at a mosque and had solicited to receive the transaction on his behalf.<sup>149</sup>

Ali wire transferred a total of \$114,500 to the plot leaders Shehhi and Atta after their arrival in the United States. Ali did not return to the Wall Street Exchange Centre. Instead, using a variety of aliases, he sent the money from the UAE Exchange Centre in Dubai, where no identification was required. On June 29, 2000, Ali, using an alias, sent a \$5,000 wire transfer to a Western Union facility in New York where Shehhi picked it up. Over the next several months, Ali sent four bank-to-bank transfers directly to a checking account jointly held by Shehhi and Atta at SunTrust Bank in Florida: \$10,000 on July 18, \$9,500 on August 5, \$20,000 on August 29, and \$70,000 on September 17. On three of these occasions he used an alias; once he went by "Mr. Ali." In each case, Ali brought cash in UAE dirhams, which were then changed into dollars; the transaction receipts reflect the conversion. All of the bank-to-bank transactions flowed through the UAE Exchange's correspondent account at Citibank. Although Ali made the last five

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<sup>147</sup> Ali also said KSM gave him money at various other face to face meetings and also wired him money. He used these funds both to support the hijackers and to buy things for KSM. He also occasionally fronted his own money in support of the hijackers, to be reimbursed by KSM. As a result, he could not be sure exactly where he got every dollar he spent.

<sup>148</sup> Ali's bank records show his accounts never contained sufficient funds to account for the money he sent to the United States, lending credence to his claim he kept the money in a laundry bag at home.

<sup>149</sup> The person who received the funds came forward shortly after 9/11 to explain that he may have unwittingly aided two men who turned out to be hijackers. The FBI interviewed him extensively and satisfied itself that he did not knowingly aid the hijackers.

transactions using various aliases, he provided enough personal information to enable the FBI to unravel the aliases after 9/11.<sup>150</sup>

In any event, aliases were not the key to Ali's security. Instead, he relied on the anonymity provided by bustling financial center of Dubai and the vast international monetary system. His employment as computer wholesaler provided perfect cover. Ali said he sent the final \$70,000 in one large transfer because Shehhi had called and asked him to "send him everything." According to Ali, KSM was displeased when he later learned of the transfer because he thought the size of the transaction would alert the security services. The amount did not worry Ali, however, because he knew that Dubai computer companies frequently transferred such amounts of money. Ali said he experienced no problem with this transfer, or any transfer in aid of the hijackers.<sup>151</sup>

Binalshibh also played a role in financing the plot by wiring, in four transfers, more than \$10,000 from Germany to the United States. On June 13, 2000, Binalshibh sent \$2,708.33 from Hamburg to Shehhi in New York via a Traveler's Express/Moneygram transfer. On June 21, 2000, he sent \$1,803.19 from Hamburg to Shehhi in New York by the same means. Binalshibh also sent two Western Union transfers from Hamburg to Shehhi in Florida, wiring \$1,760.15 and \$4,118.14 on July 25 and September 25, 2000, respectively. Binalshibh apparently funded these transfers by withdrawing money from Shehhi's account at Dresdner Bank.

In addition, Binalshibh, using an alias, sent \$14,000, in two installments, to Zacarias Moussaoui in early August 2001. Binalshibh received the money for these transfers from Hawsawi, wired in two installments on July 30 and July 31.<sup>152</sup>

As it turned out, none of the wire transfers associated with the plot—from Dubai or Germany—raised any significant suspicion or concern. They were essentially invisible in the billions of dollars in wire transfers that take place every day throughout the world.

## **Physical importation of cash and traveler's checks**

The hijackers also brought into the United States a substantial amount of cash and traveler's checks, beginning with the first hijackers to come to the United States, Mihdhar and Hazmi. Following their January 15, 2000, arrival in Los Angeles, they opened an account at Bank of America in San Diego with a \$9,900 deposit on February 4, 2000. They likely brought in more cash they deposited, as they surely had to pay for goods and services in the period between their arrival in Los Angeles and the opening of their Bank

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<sup>150</sup> The FBI effort was made possible by unprecedented cooperation from the UAE, which provided copies of the paperwork Ali used and allowed the FBI to interview witnesses. Later Ali confirmed he sent the wire transfers.

<sup>151</sup> Central Banker Sultan bin Nasser al-Suweidi was quoted in the press earlier this year as contending that the UAE reported to U.S. officials Ali's large wire transfer to Al-Shehhi a year before 9/11. *See Associated Press, Dubai Banks Remain Focus of Terror Funding Investigation* (Jan. 17, 2004) (printed from WSJ.Com, 2/5/05). We have found no evidence the UAE provided any such notification. We have been told Al-Suweidi later backed off the statement in discussions with the FBI.

<sup>152</sup> Binalshibh and Al-Hawsawi both used aliases for these transactions.

of America account in San Diego, roughly three weeks later. The \$16,000 that KSM said he gave Hazmi to support his and Mihdhar's travel and living expenses in the United States is the likely source of their funds.<sup>153</sup>

Shehhi apparently also brought some cash into the United States. He purchased \$2,000 in traveler's checks from a New York bank on May 31, 2000, two days after his arrival in New Jersey. He had apparently withdrawn these funds from his Dresdner Bank account before he left Germany. Similarly, on June 28, two days after arriving in the United States, Jarrah opened an account at a bank in Venice, Florida, with a \$2,000 cash deposit, apparently funds he had brought into the country.

The 13 muscle hijackers who arrived in the United States between April 23 and June 29, 2001, brought with them cash or traveler's checks for their own expenses and to replenish the funds of the hijackers who had previously arrived. These funds seem to have been provided directly to the muscle hijackers by plot leader KSM when he met with them in Pakistan before they transited the UAE en route to the United States, although their Dubai facilitators may have provided some additional funding.<sup>154</sup> Ali recalled that the hijackers arrived in Dubai with money to purchase plane tickets and traveler's checks, but said he may have provided some of them with additional funds. Hawsawi said he spent approximately \$7,000–\$9,000 in expenses for the hijackers in the UAE.

Investigation has confirmed that six of the muscle hijackers who arrived in this period purchased traveler's checks totaling \$43,980 in the UAE and used them in the United States.<sup>155</sup> Beyond these confirmed funds, the muscle hijackers almost surely brought in more money in cash or traveler's checks that has not been identified. Some of the newly arrived muscle made substantial deposits shortly after entering the United States, and other hijackers made deposits soon after the muscle arrived. For example, Satam al Suqami and Waleed al Shehri arrived in the United States from the UAE on April 23, 2001, and opened a bank account at SunTrust in Fort Lauderdale on May 1 with a deposit of \$9,000. It appears likely that Suqami or Shehri brought in cash or purchased traveler's checks in the UAE, although such a purchase has not been identified. Similarly, on June 1, 2001, \$3,000 was deposited into Jarrah's SunTrust account and \$8,000 was deposited into the Shehhi/Atta joint account. These funds may have been cash or traveler's checks that investigation has not yet identified, purchased and brought into the United States by

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<sup>153</sup> There has been substantial speculation that al-Mihdhar and al-Hazmi received the money in Thailand in January 2000, where they traveled with senior Al-Qaeda operative Khallad bin Attash, and where we know Khallad received funds from another al Qaeda operative. It now seems unlikely that the hijackers received funds from Khallad in Thailand in light of KSM's account of providing them with funds and Khallad's own account in which he explained Al-Mihdhar and Al-Hazmi made a spur of the moment decision to go to Bangkok with him after their initial meeting in Malaysia, largely to obtain Thai stamps on their passport, which they hoped would help ease their entry in the United States by making them appear more like tourists. Other evidence corroborates Khallad's account, and it seems more likely the hijackers received operational funds from KSM in Pakistan, as he described, than on a trip they decided to make on the spur of the moment.

<sup>154</sup> As noted above, KSM said he gave each of the muscle hijackers \$10,000 to facilitate their travel to the United States.)

<sup>155</sup> 5 The FBI has confirmed purchases by Majed Moqed, Wail Al-Shehri, Ahmed Al-Haznawi, Saeed Al-Ghamdi, Hamza Al-Ghamdi, Ahmed Al-Nami.

one or more of the three additional muscle hijackers—Hamza al Ghamdi, Ahmed al Nami, or Mohand al Shehri—who had entered the United States on May 28, 2001.<sup>156</sup>

Plot facilitators Ali and Hawsawi provided logistical assistance to the muscle hijackers as they transited the UAE en route to the United States, including assistance in purchasing plane tickets and traveler's checks. Phone records indicate that Ali aided the hijackers through May 2001 and that, thereafter, Hawsawi became the primary facilitator. A notebook Al-Hawsawi maintained shows payments he made to or on behalf hijackers transiting the UAE in June.

Ali has confirmed his role in assisting the muscle hijackers while they were in the UAE. KSM provided them with Ali's phone number, and they called him upon their arrival. He assisted them in purchasing airline tickets, traveler's checks, and Western-style clothes; arranged hotels and food; and also taught them Western skills, such as ordering at fast-food restaurants. It is not clear why Hawsawi got involved in the plot. Ali said he requested that KSM send someone to Dubai to assist him with the transiting operatives because he feared the time required to support the hijackers and train them to adapt to Western life would impinge on his day job with the computer company. According to Ali, KSM then directed Hawsawi to help him; but by the time Hawsawi arrived, Ali discovered the hijackers were not staying very long in Dubai and did not demand much of his time. It is hard to imagine that Ali was so concerned about his day job, but no other reason for Hawsawi's involvement is readily apparent.

Hawsawi has acknowledged aiding some of the muscle hijackers in the UAE. In addition, he assisted and provided funds to Mohamed al Kahtani, who was selected as a hijacker and flew to Orlando before being denied access to the United States. Kahtani had \$2,800 cash in his possession when he arrived at the airport in Florida.

The hijackers who traveled internationally after arriving in the United States also carried funds back with them. For example, Mihdhar purchased \$4,900 in traveler's checks in Saudi Arabia shortly before he returned to the United States on July 4, 2001, after an extended absence. According to Hawsawi's notebook, Hawsawi gave the funds to Mihdhar in the UAE in June 2001 to buy these checks. In some instances, we cannot determine whether the hijackers brought in more cash from overseas travel. For example, in the weeks after Shehhi returned to Florida from a trip to Egypt on May 2, 2001, several large deposits were made into his SunTrust account (\$8,600 on May 11 and \$3,400 on May 22). It is unclear whether the deposits came from funds Shehhi received overseas, funds brought by the muscle hijackers arriving in late May, or funds previously withdrawn and not spent.

Zacarias Moussaoui brought more money into the United States than any other person associated with the 9/11 attacks. Moussaoui declared \$35,000 to Customs when he arrived in the United States from London on February 23, 2001, and he deposited \$32,000 into a Norman, Oklahoma, bank three days later.

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<sup>156</sup> Some hijackers declared funds when they entered the U.S., but others, who we know had funds with them, did not.

## **Accessing overseas accounts**

The hijackers also financed their activities in the United States by accessing funds deposited into overseas accounts. There are two primary examples of this method. Hani Hanjour maintained accounts at the Saudi British Bank in Saudi Arabia and at Citibank in the UAE. While in the United States, he accessed his foreign accounts through an ATM card to finance his activities. Approximately \$9,600 was deposited into the Saudi British Bank account, and \$8,000 into the Citibank account. Ali said he provided Hanjour with \$3,000 to open the Citibank account and deposited another \$5,000 into that account while Hanjour was in the United States.<sup>157</sup>

One of the muscle hijackers, Fayez Banihammad, also set up an overseas account to provide funding in the United States. On June 25, 2001, with the aid of Hawsawi, Banihammad opened two accounts at the Standard Chartered Bank in the UAE and deposited about \$30,000 in UAE dirhams. According to Hawsawi, Banihammad brought the funds with him to open the accounts when he came to the UAE. Hawsawi was given power of attorney over the accounts on July 18, 2001. The accounts were accessible by an ATM card and a Visa card. Hawsawi received the Visa card from the bank after Banihammad departed for the United States and apparently sent it to Banihammad in the United States by express delivery. After his arrival in the United States on June 27, Banihammad made cash withdrawals with both cards to help fund the plot in the United States, and he used the Visa card to purchase the 9/11 plane tickets for himself and one of the muscle hijackers and to pay his Boston hotel bill on the morning of 9/11. Hawsawi apparently bolstered Banihammad's financing with a deposit of \$4,900 on August 20, 2001, into Banihammad's SCB account.

## **No aid from U.S. persons**

No credible evidence exists that the hijackers received any substantial funding from any person in the United States. With one possible minor exception discussed below, the FBI's investigation has not revealed any evidence that any person in the United States knowingly provided any funding to the hijackers. Extensive investigation by Commission staff has revealed nothing to the contrary.

Despite persistent public speculation, there is no evidence that the hijackers who initially settled in San Diego, Mihdhar and Hazmi, received funding from Saudi citizens Omar al Bayoumi and Osama Bassnan, or that Saudi Princess Haifa al Faisal provided any funds to the hijackers either directly or indirectly. A number of internal FBI documents state without reservation that Bayoumi paid rent on behalf of Mihdhar and Hazmi, a claim reflecting the initial view of some FBI agents. More thorough investigation, however, has determined that Bayoumi did not pay rent or provide any funding to the hijackers. On one

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<sup>157</sup> Hanjour also received \$900 from his brother, who is not believed to be a witting supporter of the plot. The origin of the rest of the funds is unclear, although Hanjour may have received funds when he transited Pakistan in June 2000.



occasion he did obtain a cashier's check to assist Mihdhar and Hazmi pay a security deposit and first month's rent, but the hijackers immediately reimbursed him from their funds.

The one person who evidence indicates may have provided money to a hijacker in the United States was Yazeed al Salmi, a Saudi citizen who came to the United States on a student visa in August 2000; he settled in San Diego, where he came into contact with future hijacker Nawaf al Hazmi. On September 5, 2000, \$1,900 was deposited into Hazmi's San Diego Bank of America account from a set of \$4,000 in traveler's checks that Salmi had purchased in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, on July 16, 2000. Little more is known about this transaction. After September 11, Salmi was detained as a material witness because of his contact with Hazmi, and was debriefed extensively by the FBI. He even testified to the grand jury before being deported to Saudi Arabia. Unfortunately, the FBI did not learn that Salmi's traveler's checks wound up in Hazmi's account until after he was deported, and Salmi never informed his interrogators of the matter. In June 2004, Salmi was interviewed regarding the transaction, and claimed not to recall it. There are no other known witnesses to this transaction.

Did Salmi fund Hazmi, knowingly or otherwise? It appears likely that Hazmi did nothing more than facilitate a transaction for Salmi. Indeed, Hazmi's bank records reveal that he withdrew \$1,900 in cash the same day he deposited the \$1,900 in traveler's checks. This large withdrawal is unusual for Hazmi, as he tended to make much smaller cash withdrawals or use his debit card. Moreover, Salmi did not yet have a bank account in the United States at the time of the transaction, so it is entirely possible that he simply asked Hazmi to do him the favor of cashing the traveler's checks for him.<sup>158</sup>

There is no evidence that Salmi ever provided Hazmi with any other funds. Neither Salmi's account at Bank of America nor Hazmi's account there reflects any other transfers or indicia of transfers. There is no evidence that any other person in San Diego provided Hazmi or any other hijacker with any funds.<sup>159</sup>

## **No hawalas, self-funding, or state support**

The extensive investigation into the financing of the 9/11 plot has revealed no evidence to suggest that the hijackers used hawala or any other informal value transfer mechanism to send money to the United States. Moreover, KSM and the other surviving plot participants have either not mentioned hawalas or explicitly denied they were used. Wire transfers, physical importation of funds, and access of foreign bank accounts were sufficient to support the hijackers; there seems to be no reason al Qaeda would have used

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<sup>158</sup> Al-Salmi opened an account at Bank of America on September 11, 2000, according to the account opening document.

<sup>159</sup> In September 2000, Al-Hazmi assisted another San Diego associate with a transaction by writing a check on his behalf. Thus, the associate provided Al-Hazmi with \$3000, and Al-Hazmi immediately wrote a check for that amount on behalf of the associate. The transaction was a wash, which resulted in no funding of Al-Hazmi.

hawalas as well. Although al Qaeda frequently used hawalas to transfer funds from the Gulf area to Pakistan and Afghanistan, we have not seen any evidence that al Qaeda employed them in moving money to or from the United States.<sup>160</sup>

The hijackers were apparently not expected to provide their own financing once they arrived in the United States. There is no evidence that any of them held jobs in the United States, with the exception of Nawaf al Hazmi, who worked part-time in a gas station for about a month, earning \$6 an hour. As discussed above, Shehhi received a salary from the UAE military through December 23, 2000, but did not do any work for this money. There is no evidence to suggest that any of the hijackers engaged in any type of criminal activity to support themselves. Finally, there is no evidence that any government funded the 9/11 plot in whole or part.

### ***Hijackers use of U.S. banks***

While in the United States, the hijackers made extensive use of U.S. banks. They chose branches of major international banks, such as Bank of America and SunTrust, and smaller regional banks, such as the Hudson United Bank and Dime Savings Bank in New Jersey. Plot leaders Atta and Shehhi may have chosen SunTrust because their Florida flight school banked there and directed its students to use it as well. The muscle hijackers who later linked up with Atta and Shehhi also opened accounts at SunTrust. There is no information available as to how or why the hijackers chose other banks. The hijackers typically opened checking accounts and Visa debit card accounts at the same time.

All of the hijackers opened accounts in their own name, using passports and other identification documents. Contrary to numerous published reports, there is no evidence the hijackers ever used false Social Security numbers to open any bank accounts. In some cases, a bank employee completed the Social Security number field on the new account application with a hijacker's date of birth or visa control number, but did so on his or her own to complete the form. No hijacker presented or stated a false number.

The hijackers were not experts on the use of the U.S. financial system. For example, the teller who opened the initial Atta-Shehhi joint account at SunTrust in July 2000 said she spent about an hour with them, explaining the process of wiring money. On one occasion in June 2001, the hijackers aroused suspicion at a SunTrust branch in Florida while attempting to cash a check for \$2,180. Shehhi presented identification documents with different addresses, and the bank personnel thought the signature on the check did not match his signature on file. The bank manager refused to sign the check and issued an internal alert to other SunTrust branches to watch the account for possible fraud. The internal alert was a routine notice sent in accordance with SunTrust's loss avoidance procedures. SunTrust never considered reporting Shehhi to the government because it had no evidence he had done anything illegal. No one at SunTrust or any other financial institution thought, or had any reason to think, that the hijackers were criminals, let alone

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<sup>160</sup> See chapter 2 re al Qaeda's use of hawala, generally.

terrorists bent on mass murder, and no financial institution had any reason to report their behavior to the government.

The hijackers' transactions themselves were not extraordinary or remarkable. The hijackers generally followed a pattern of occasional large deposits, which they accessed frequently through relatively small ATM and debit card transactions. They also made cash withdrawals and some occasionally wrote checks. In short, they used their accounts just as did many other bank customers. No one monitoring their transactions alone would have had any basis for concern.

Contrary to persistent media reports, no financial institution filed a Suspicious Activity Report (SAR) in connection with any transaction of any of the 19 hijackers before 9/11, although such SARs were filed after 9/11 when their names became public. The failure to file SARs was not unreasonable. Even in hindsight, there is nothing—including the SunTrust situation described above—to indicate that any SAR should have been filed or the hijackers otherwise reported to law enforcement.

### ***Return of funds to al Qaeda***

From September 5 through September 10, 2001, the hijackers consolidated their unused funds and sent them to Hawsawi in the UAE. On September 5, Banihammad wired \$8,000 from his account at SunTrust Bank to his Standard Chartered Bank account in the UAE. On September 8 through 10, the hijackers sent four Western Union wire transfers totaling \$18,260 to Hawsawi at two different exchange houses in the UAE. In addition, Hazmi and Mihdhar deposited their excess cash into an account held by Mihdhar at First Union Bank in New Jersey, bringing the balance to \$9,838.31 on September 10. That same day, Hazmi and Hanjour sent an express mail package containing the debit card linked to Mihdhar's First Union account to a P.O. box in the UAE rented by Hawsawi. After the 9/11 attacks, a receipt for the sending of this package was found in Hazmi's car at Dulles International Airport, and the FBI intercepted the package.

Binalshibh said that when he spoke by phone with Atta in early September 2001, Atta said he wanted to return some leftover funds. At the time, Binalshibh was in Madrid trying to get a flight to Dubai, and had visa and passport problems. He explained his visa and passport issues to Atta and advised him to send the money to someone else. Atta then called Hawsawi to give him the information needed to pick up the wire transfers, as did the other hijackers who wired money to Hawsawi. Binalshibh and Atta also discussed the return of funds.

On September 11, Hawsawi used a blank check that Banihammad had provided him earlier and an ATM card to withdraw from Banihammad's Standard Chartered Bank account the approximately \$7,880 in dirhams that Banihammad had wired there. He then deposited about \$16,348 in dirhams to his own checking account at Standard Chartered Bank, reflecting the proceeds of the wire transfers he had received. Next, he transferred \$41,000 from his checking account to his Standard Chartered Bank Visa card and left

Dubai for Karachi, Pakistan, leaving some funds in the account. On September 13, 2001, KSM used a supplemental Visa card issued for Hawsawi's Standard Chartered Bank account to make six cash withdrawals at ATMs in Karachi totaling about \$900.<sup>161</sup> The remaining funds, roughly \$40,000, were not withdrawn or transferred before the UAE froze the account after September 11. KSM has since acknowledged withdrawing funds returned by Atta to Hawsawi; he claimed he gave the money to a senior al Qaeda leader, Abu Hafs, in Kandahar. It is not clear if KSM was referring to the approximately \$900 he withdrew from the account, or if Hawsawi had provided KSM with additional funds in cash after 9/11.

The hijackers' efforts during their final days to consolidate and return funds to al Qaeda reflect their recognition of the importance of money to the organization. Although some of the hijackers did squander relatively small amounts on superfluous purchases, including pornography, they generally consumed little, and plot leader Atta was especially frugal. Indeed, Binalshibh has explained that frugality was important to Atta because he did not want to waste funds he considered to be blessed and honored.

### ***Funding of Other Plot Participants***

In addition to the 19 hijackers, other plot participants received al Qaeda funding for their role in the plot. KSM said that he, Binalshibh, and Hawsawi each received \$10,000 (in addition to the funds they provided the hijackers). The details of this funding are not entirely clear, but KSM said he personally used \$6,000 of his money to rent a safehouse in Karachi. Ali required no support from al Qaeda, as he already lived and worked in the UAE. By contrast, al Qaeda had to pay for Hawsawi, the other UAE-based plot facilitator, because he traveled and was living there solely to support 9/11 and other al Qaeda operations. Hawsawi incurred substantial expenses on behalf of the plot, covering travel, apartment rental, car rental, and living expenses.

The available evidence does not make clear how Hawsawi received funds for his plot-related activities. He claimed he received \$30,000 in cash from Hamza al Qatari—then an al Qaeda financial manager—that Hawsawi brought into the UAE with him. Hawsawi claimed he received no other funds except for approximately \$3,000–\$4,500 that Banihammad brought to him, which he assumes came from KSM or Qatari. Although Hawsawi claimed that these funds were sufficient for all his activities in the UAE, their total was clearly less than Hawsawi's known expenses in the UAE. These included aiding the 9/11 hijackers, financing his own living expenses, buying supplies for al Qaeda, wiring Binalshibh a total of \$16,500, wiring funds to another likely al Qaeda operative in Saudi Arabia, and providing \$13,000 to yet another al Qaeda operative who transited the UAE before departing for another operation on September 10, 2001. Moreover, KSM gave a different account of how Hawsawi was funded. In KSM's version, Hawsawi had a budget of \$100,000 and KSM provided all the funds, either by courier or by the muscle hijackers as they traversed the UAE after picking up the money from KSM in Pakistan.

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<sup>161</sup> The supplemental Visa card had been applied for on August 25, 2001 in the name of an alias used by KSM.

While in the UAE, Hawsawi received two wire transfers totaling about \$6,500 from a Sudanese national then living in Saudi Arabia. Both the transfers were sent in August 2001 from the National Commercial Bank in Saudi Arabia to Hawsawi's Standard Chartered Bank account in the UAE. According to information provided by a foreign security agency, the sender claims he was asked to wire the funds by Uthman al Shehri, the brother of hijackers Walced and Wail al Shehri. The purpose of the transaction remains unknown, and the relevant witnesses are currently beyond the reach of the U.S. government.

Binalshibh said that he met KSM in Karachi in June 2001; there KSM gave him a plane ticket to Malaysia, where he planned to meet with Atta.<sup>162</sup> Binalshibh said he also received \$5,000 from Abu Hafs to support his travel in June. He may have received additional funds during this trip. According to Binalshibh, he was living on al Qaeda money when he returned to Germany in June 2001. On September 3, 2001, Hawsawi, using an alias, wired \$1,500 from the UAE to Binalshibh, also using an alias, in Hamburg, presumably to pay for his subsequent travel from Germany, which took place on September 5.

Binalshibh also funded his activities in part by controlling Marwan al Shehhi's bank account, which he apparently accessed with an ATM card, and with the assistance of Motassadeq, who held power of attorney over the account. Binalshibh himself said that Shehhi left him "a credit card" when Shehhi departed Hamburg for the United States in mid-2000. For example, Binalshibh withdrew money from Shehhi's account to send \$2,200 to the Florida Flight Training Center in August 2000 in apparent anticipation of his own arrival in the United States. Activity in Shehhi's German bank account indicates that Binalshibh was accessing his funds while he was in the United States.

In January 2001 Atta, sent a \$1,500 wire transfer via Western Union from Florida to Binalshibh in Hamburg. There is no known explanation for this transaction, which seems especially odd because Binalshibh had access to Shehhi's German account at the time.

## **Total Cost**

We estimate that the total cost of the 9/11 attacks was somewhere between \$400,000 and \$500,000. The hijackers spent more than \$270,000 in the United States, and the costs associated with Moussaoui were at least \$50,000. The additional expenses included travel to obtain passports and visas, travel to the United States, expenses incurred by the plot leader and facilitators, and the expenses incurred by would-be hijackers who ultimately did not participate. For many of these expenses, we have only a mixture of fragmentary evidence and unconfirmed reports, and can make only a rough estimate of costs. Adding up all the known and assumed costs leads to a rough range of \$400,000 to \$500,000. This estimate does not include the cost of running training camps in Afghanistan where the

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<sup>162</sup> The meeting in Malaysia ultimately did not take place because Atta was busy awaiting the arrival of the additional hijackers in the U.S.; the meeting took place later in Spain.

hijackers were recruited and trained or the marginal cost of the training itself. For what its worth, the architect of the plot, KSM, put the total cost at approximately \$400,000, including the money provided to the hijackers and other facilitators, although apparently excluding Moussaoui. Although we cannot know if this estimate is accurate, it seems to be reasonable, given the information available.

Ultimately, knowing the exact total cost of the plot makes little difference. However calculated, the expense—although substantial—constituted a small fraction of al Qaeda’s budget at the time. As we discuss in chapter 2, al Qaeda’s annual budget for the relevant period has been estimated to be about \$30 million. Even today, with its estimated revenues significantly reduced, al Qaeda could still likely come up with the funds to finance a similar attack.

### ***Origin of the Funds***

To date, the U.S. government has not been able to determine the origin of the money used for the 9/11 attacks. As we have discussed above, the compelling evidence appears to trace the bulk of the funds directly back to KSM and, possibly, Qatari, but no further.<sup>163</sup> Available information on this subject has thus far has not been illuminating.<sup>164</sup> According to KSM, Bin Ladin provided 85–95 percent of the funds for the plot from his personal wealth, with the remainder coming from general al Qaeda funds. To the extent KSM intended to refer to wealth Bin Ladin inherited from his family or derived from any business activity, this claim is almost certainly wrong, because Bin Ladin was not personally financing al Qaeda during this time frame.<sup>165</sup> Ultimately the question of the origin of the funds is of little practical significance. Al Qaeda had many avenues of funding. If a particular source of funds dried up, it could have easily tapped a different source or diverted money from a different project to fund an attack that cost \$400,000–\$500,000 over nearly two years.

We know that a small percentage of the plot funds originated in the bank account of Shehhi, which apparently came from his military salary. Binalshibh drew on these funds to wire approximately \$10,000 to Shehhi in the United States, as well as to support his own role in the plot to some degree. Al Qaeda does not necessarily have to completely fund terrorist operatives. Some, like Shehhi, have means and can fund themselves, at least in part, a factor that makes the fight on “terrorist financing” all the more difficult.

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<sup>163</sup> FBI Assistant Director Pistole testified that the FBI had traced the funds back to certain bank accounts in Pakistan, *see* Senate Govt. Affairs Committee, July 31, 2003, but the FBI has clarified that Pistole meant the funds were traced back to KSM in Pakistan. No actual bank accounts there have been identified.

<sup>164</sup> Senior al Qaeda detainee Abu Zubaydeh has commented on the source of the funding; he said that KSM received funds for the 9/11 operation directly from UBL, bypassing al Qaeda Finance Chief, Shayk Said, and suggested that some of the funds came from money that Zubaydeh had provided UBL for use in an operation against Israel. Zubaydeh, however, apparently did not participate in the 9/11 planning, and his statements lack any foundation.

<sup>165</sup> Instead, al Qaeda relied on donations provided by witting donors and diverted from legitimate charitable donations by al Qaeda supporters. *See* chapter 2 (discussing al Qaeda financing). It is also possible KSM meant that Bin Ladin funded the plot with funds he kept under his personal control.

## **Appendix B: Securities Trading**

This appendix describes the staff and U.S. government investigations into the issue of whether anyone with foreknowledge of the 9/11 attacks profited through securities trading, and explains the conclusion in the Commission's final report that extensive government investigation has revealed no evidence of such illicit trading.

Almost since 9/11 itself, there have been consistent reports that massive "insider trading" preceded the attacks, enabling persons apparently affiliated with al Qaeda to reap huge profits. The Commission has found no evidence to support these reports. To the contrary, exhaustive investigation by federal law enforcement, in conjunction with the securities industry, has found no evidence that anyone with advance knowledge of the terrorist attacks profited through securities transactions.

### ***Commission Staff Investigation***

Commission staff had unrestricted access to the U.S. government officials who led and conducted the investigation into securities trading in advance of 9/11. In addition to interviewing the key personnel, Commission staff reviewed the nonpublic government reports summarizing the investigative results as well as backup data, including spreadsheets, memoranda and other analyses, and reports of interviews with traders, securities industry participants, and other witnesses. We obtained and reviewed the reports of investigations done by certain major nongovernmental securities industries bodies who share responsibility with the government for monitoring securities trading in U.S. markets, including the New York Stock Exchange and the National Association of Securities Dealers Regulation, and interviewed witnesses from a key private-sector entity. Commission staff also reviewed information provided by foreign securities regulators, interviewed German law enforcement officials, and interviewed U.S. law enforcement personnel regarding their contacts with their foreign counterparts on securities trading.

In addition, Commission staff drew on its review of extensive classified intelligence concerning al Qaeda and how it manages its operations and its finances, as well as debriefings of al Qaeda detainees, including 9/11 plot leader Khalid Sheikh Mohammed and other plot participants. This information proved useful in evaluating how closely held al Qaeda kept the 9/11 operation and the likelihood it would seek to profit from the attacks through securities trading.

### ***The U.S. Government Investigation of Trading in the United States***

The Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) and the FBI, with the involvement of the Department of Justice, conducted the investigation of the allegation that there was

illicit trading in advance of 9/11; numerous other agencies played a supporting role.<sup>166</sup> The SEC's chief of the Office of Market Surveillance initiated an investigation into pre-9/11 trading on September 12, 2001. At a multi-agency meeting on September 17, at FBI headquarters, the SEC agreed to lead the insider trading investigation, keeping the FBI involved as necessary. The Department of Justice assigned a white-collar crime prosecutor from the U.S. Attorney's Office in Brooklyn to work full-time on the investigation; he relocated to Washington, D.C., on September 18.

The SEC undertook a massive investigation, which at various times involved more than 40 staff members from the SEC's Division of Enforcement and Office of International Affairs. The SEC also took the lead on coordinating intensive investigations by the self-regulatory organizations (SROs) that share responsibility for monitoring the U.S. securities markets, including, among others, the New York Stock Exchange, the American Stock Exchange, the National Association of Securities Dealers Regulation, and the Chicago Board Options Exchange. The investigation focused on securities of companies or industries that could have been expected to suffer economically from the terrorist attacks. Thus, the investigators analyzed trading in the following sectors: airlines, insurance, financial services, defense and aerospace, security services, and travel and leisure services, as well as companies with substantial operations in the area of the World Trade Center. The investigation also included broad-based funds that could have been affected by a major shock to the U.S. economy. Ultimately, the investigators analyzed trading in 103 individual companies and 32 index or exchange-traded funds and examined more than 9.5 million securities transactions.

The investigators reviewed any trading activity that resulted in substantial profit from the terrorist attacks. Investments that profited from dropping stock prices drew great scrutiny, including short selling<sup>167</sup> and the purchase of put options.<sup>168</sup> The SEC has long experience in investigating insider trading violations, which can involve the use of these techniques by those who know of an impending event that will make stock prices fall. The investigators also sought to determine who profited from well-timed investments in industries that benefited from the terrorist attacks, such as the stock of defense and security companies, and who timely liquidated substantial holdings in companies likely to suffer from the attacks.

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<sup>166</sup> The SEC is an independent federal agency entrusted with enforcing the federal securities laws. Its Division of Enforcement has extensive experience in investigating insider trading. Because the SEC lacks authority to bring criminal cases, it regularly works jointly with the FBI and DOJ, as it did in this case, on potentially criminal securities law violations.

<sup>167</sup> Short selling is a strategy that profits from a decline in stock price. A short seller borrows stock from a broker dealer and sells it on the open market. At some point in the future, he closes the transaction by buying back the stock and returning it to the lending broker dealer.

<sup>168</sup> A put option is an investment that profits when the underlying stock price falls. A put option contract gives its owner the right to sell the underlying stock at a specified strike price for a certain period of time. If the actual price drops below the strike price, the owner of the put profits because he can buy stock cheaper than the price for which he can sell it. By contrast, a call option contract is an investment that profits when the underlying stock price rises. A call option contract gives its owner the right to buy the underlying stock at a specified strike price for a certain time period. People illicitly trading on inside information often have used options because they allow the trader to leverage an initial investment, so that a relatively small investment can generate huge profits.



The SEC investigators reviewed voluminous trading records to identify accounts that made trades that led to profits as a result of the attacks. The SEC followed up on any such trades by obtaining documents and, where appropriate, interviewing the traders to understand the rationale for the trades. The SEC also referred to the FBI any trade that resulted in substantial profit from the attacks—a much lower threshold for a criminal referral than it would normally employ. Consequently, the FBI conducted its own independent interviews of many of the potentially suspicious traders. The SROs, which have extensive market surveillance departments, played a key role in the SEC investigation by providing information and, in some cases, detailed reports to the commission. In addition, the SEC directly contacted 20 of the largest broker-dealers and asked them to survey their trading desks for any evidence of illicit trading activity. It also asked the Securities Industry Association—the broker-dealer trade group—to canvass its members for the same purpose.

The SEC investigation had built-in redundancies to ensure that any suspicious trading would be caught. For example, the SEC reviewed massive transaction records to detect any suspicious option trading and also obtained reports, known as the Large Option Position Reports and Open Interest Distribution Reports, that identified the holders of substantial amounts of options without regard to when those options were purchased. Similarly, to ensure full coverage, the SEC obtained information from a number of entities that play a role in facilitating short sales. Between these efforts, the work of the SROs, and the outreach to industry, the chief SEC investigator expressed great confidence that the SEC investigation had detected any potentially suspicious trade.

### ***No Evidence of Illicit Trading in the United States***

The U.S. government investigation unequivocally concluded that there was no evidence of illicit trading in the U.S. markets with knowledge of the terrorist attacks. The Commission staff, after an independent review of the government investigation, has discovered no reason to doubt this conclusion.

To understand our finding, it is critical to understand the transparency of the U.S. markets. No one can make a securities trade in the U.S. markets without leaving a paper trail that the SEC can easily access through its regulatory powers. Moreover, broker-dealers must maintain certain basic information on their customers. It is, of course, entirely possible to trade through an offshore company, or a series of nominee accounts and shell companies, a strategy that can make the beneficial owner hard to determine. Still, the investigators could always detect the initial trade, even if they could not determine the beneficial owner. Any suspicious profitable trading through such accounts would be starkly visible. The investigators of the 9/11 trades never found any blind alleys caused by shell companies, offshore accounts, or anything else; they were able to investigate the suspicious trades they identified. Every suspicious trade was determined to be part of a legitimate trading strategy totally unrelated to the terrorist attacks.

Many of the public reports concerning insider trading before 9/11 focused on the two airline companies most directly involved: UAL Corp., the parent company of United Airlines, and AMR Corp., the parent company of American Airlines. Specifically, many people have correctly pointed out that unusually high volumes of put options traded in UAL on September 6–7 and in AMR on September 10.<sup>169</sup>

When the markets opened on September 17, AMR fell 40 percent and UAL fell 43 percent. The suspicious options trading before the attacks fueled speculation that al Qaeda had taken advantage of the U.S. markets to make massive profits from its murderous attacks. The allegations had appeal on their face—just as al Qaeda used our sophisticated transportation system to attack us, it appeared to have used our sophisticated markets to finance itself and provide money for more attacks. But we conclude that this scenario simply did not happen.

Although this report will not discuss each of the trades that profited from the 9/11 attacks, some of the larger trades, particularly those cited in the media as troubling, are illustrative and typical both of the nature of the government investigation into the trades and of the innocent nature of the trading. The put trading in AMR and UAL is a case in point: it appeared that somebody made big money by betting UAL and AMR stock prices were going to collapse, yet closer inspection revealed that the transactions were part of an innocuous trading strategy.

The UAL trading on September 6 is a good example. On that day alone, the UAL put option volume was much higher than any surrounding day and exceeded the call option volume by more than 20 times—highly suspicious numbers on their face.<sup>170</sup> The SEC quickly discovered, however, that a single U.S. investment adviser had purchased 95 percent of the UAL put option volume for the day. The investment adviser certainly did not fit the profile of an al Qaeda operative: it was based in the United States, registered with the SEC, and managed several hedge funds with \$5.3 billion under management. In interviews by the SEC, both the CEO of the adviser and the trader who executed the trade explained that they—and not any client—made the decision to buy the put as part of a trading strategy based on a bearish view of the airline industry. They held bearish views for a number of reasons, including recently released on-time departure figures, which suggested the airlines were carrying fewer passengers, and recently disclosed news by AMR reflecting poor business fundamentals. In pursuit of this strategy, the adviser sold short a number of airline shares between September 6 and September 10; its transactions included the fortunate purchase of UAL puts. The adviser, however, also bought 115,000 shares of AMR on September 10, believing that their price already reflected the recently released financial information and would not fall any further. Those shares dropped significantly when the markets reopened after the attacks. Looking at the totality of the adviser's circumstances, as opposed to just the purchase of the puts, convinced the SEC that it had absolutely nothing to do with the attacks or al Qaeda. Still, the SEC referred

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<sup>169</sup> See, e.g., September 18, 2001 Associated Press Report.

<sup>170</sup> A high ratio of puts to calls means that on that day far more money was being bet that the stock price would fall than that the stock price would rise. Such a ratio is a potential indicator of insider trading—although it can also prove to have entirely innocuous explanations, as in this case.

the trade to the FBI, which also conducted its own investigation and reached the same conclusion.

The AMR put trading on September 10 further reveals how trading that looks highly suspicious at first blush can prove innocuous. The put volume of AMR on September 10 was unusually high and actually exceeded the call volume by a ratio of 6:1—again, highly suspicious on its face. The SEC traced much of the surge in volume to a California investment advice newsletter, distributed by email and fax on Sunday, September 9, which advised its subscribers to purchase a particular type of AMR put options. The SEC interviewed 28 individuals who purchased these types of AMR puts on September 10, and found that 26 of them cited the newsletter as the reason for their transaction. Another 27 purchasers were listed as subscribers of the newsletter. The SEC interviewed the author of the newsletter, a U.S. citizen, who explained his investment strategy analysis, which had nothing to do with foreknowledge of 9/11. Other put option volume on September 10 was traced to similarly innocuous trades.

Another good example concerns a suspicious UAL put trade on September 7, 2001. A single trader bought more than one-third of the total puts purchased that day, establishing a position that proved very profitable after 9/11. Moreover, it turns out that the same trader had a short position in UAL calls—another strategy that would pay off if the price of UAL dropped. Investigation, however, identified the purchaser as a well-established New York hedge fund with \$2 billion under management. Setting aside the unlikelihood of al Qaeda having a relationship with a major New York hedge fund, these trades looked facially suspicious. But further examination showed the fund also owned 29,000 shares of UAL stock at the time—all part of a complex, computer-driven trading strategy. As a result of these transactions, the fund actually *lost* \$85,000 in value when the market reopened. Had the hedge fund wanted to profit from the attacks, it would not have retained the UAL shares.

These examples were typical. The SEC and the FBI investigated all of the put option purchases in UAL and AMR, drawing on multiple and redundant sources of information to ensure complete coverage. All profitable option trading was investigated and resolved. There was no evidence of illicit trading and no unexplained or mysterious trading. Moreover, there was no evidence that profits from any profitable options trading went uncollected.<sup>171</sup>

The options trading in UAL and AMR was typical of the entire investigation. In all sectors and companies whose trades looked suspicious because of their timing and

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<sup>171</sup> The press has reported this claim, and the allegation even found its way into the congressional testimony concerning terrorist financing of a former government official. The government investigation would have detected such traders because the investigators focused on people who purchased profitable positions—regardless of when or whether or when they closed out the position. Moreover, officials at the SEC and the Options Clearing Corporation, a private entity that processes options trading, pointed out that any profitable options positions are automatically exercised upon the expiration date unless the customer explicitly directed otherwise. Any direction not to exercise profitable options is a highly unusual event, which the OCC double-checks by contacting the broker who gave them such instruction. The OCC personnel had no recollection of any such contacts after 9/11.

profitability, including short selling of UAL, AMR, and other airline stocks, close scrutiny revealed absolutely no evidence of foreknowledge. The pattern is repeated over and over. For example, the FBI investigated a trader who bought a substantial position in put options in AIG Insurance Co. shortly before 9/11. Viewed in isolation, the trade looked highly suspicious, especially when AIG stock plummeted after 9/11. The FBI found that the trade had been made by a fund manager to hedge a long position of 4.2 million shares in the AIG common stock. The fund manager owned a significant amount of AIG stock, but the fund had a very low tax basis in the stock (that is, it had been bought long ago and had appreciated significantly over time). Selling even some of it would have created a massive tax liability. Thus, the fund manager chose to hedge his position through a put option purchase. After 9/11, the fund profited substantially from its investment in puts. At the same time, however, it suffered a substantial loss on the common stock, and overall lost money as a result of the attacks.

In sum, the investigation found absolutely no evidence that any trading occurred with foreknowledge of 9/11. The transparency of the U.S. securities markets almost ensures that any such trading would be detectable by investigators. Even if the use of some combination of offshore accounts, shell companies, and false identification obscured the identity of the traders themselves, the unexplained trade would stand out like a giant red flag. The absence of any such flags corroborates the conclusion that there is no evidence any such trading occurred. Indeed, the leaders of both the SEC and FBI investigations into pre-9/11 trading expressed great confidence in this conclusion.

### ***International Investigation***

There is also no evidence that any illicit trading occurred overseas. Through its Office of International Affairs, the SEC sought the assistance of numerous foreign countries with active securities markets. The FBI also engaged with foreign law enforcement officials about overseas trading. There are two issues to consider with respect to the international investigation: overseas trading in U.S. securities and trading of foreign securities in overseas markets.

### ***Trading of U.S. securities overseas***

The SEC sought the assistance of countries where there was significant trading of U.S. securities. Each of these countries had previously entered into information sharing agreements with the SEC to cooperate in securities investigations, and each willingly cooperated in the 9/11 investigation. According to the SEC, there is generally little trading of U.S. securities overseas, since U.S. securities trade primarily in U.S. markets. Thus, unusual trading in U.S. securities would not have been very hard for foreign regulators to detect. Each country the SEC contacted conducted an investigation and reported back to the SEC that there was no trading in U.S. securities in their jurisdiction that appeared to have been influenced by foreknowledge of the 9/11 attacks.

The foreign investigators also helped investigate suspicious trading in the U.S. from offshore accounts. For example, the SEC investigation revealed that shortly before 9/11 an offshore account had taken a short position in a fund that tracked one of the major U.S. market indices—an investment that profited when the U.S. market declined. After 9/11, the offshore investor closed out the position, reaping \$5 million in profit. The SEC's Office of International Affairs solicited help from a European country to investigate further. Although this trade was highly suspicious on its face, the European country's investigation revealed that this investor was an extremely wealthy European national who often speculated by taking short positions in the U.S. market. In fact, the same investor had employed this strategy to lose \$8 million in the six months preceding 9/11.

### ***Trading of foreign securities***

There is also no evidence that insider trading took place in the stock of any foreign company. The SEC asked its foreign counterparts to investigate trading in securities that trade primarily on foreign markets subject to foreign regulation. Indeed, a number of companies that suffered serious economic losses from the 9/11 attacks were foreign companies, which traded mainly on foreign markets. In particular, the insurance companies with the largest potential losses included Munich Reinsurance Co., Swiss Reinsurance Co., and Allianz AG, all foreign-based companies that primarily traded overseas.<sup>172</sup> In addition to the SEC, the FBI team investigating the financial aspects of the 9/11 plot frequently dealt with foreign law enforcement officials after 9/11 and raised the trading issue.<sup>173</sup> Neither the SEC nor the FBI was informed of any evidence of any illicit trading in advance of 9/11 in any foreign securities.

Shortly after 9/11, Ernst Welteke, president of the German Central Bank, made a number of public statements that insider trading occurred in airline and insurance company stock, and also in gold and oil futures. These preliminary claims were never confirmed. In fact, German officials publicly backtracked fairly soon after Mr. Welteke's statement was issued. On September 27, a spokesman for the German securities regulator, BAWe (Bundesaufsichtsamt für den Wertpapierhandel), declared that while the investigation was continuing, "there is no evidence that anyone who had knowledge of the attacks before they were committed used it to make financial transactions."<sup>174</sup> On December 3, 2001, a spokesman for the BAWe said its investigation had revealed no evidence of illicit

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<sup>172</sup> According to the SEC's Chief, Market Surveillance, the countries with the most significant relevant trading of foreign corporations stock were the UK and Germany. The UK quickly and publicly reported it had found no illicit trading. *See e.g.*, J. Moore, *The Times*, *Bin Ladin did not Deal* (October 17, 2001) (Chairman of Financial Services Authority reported that investigation failed to reveal evidence of irregular share dealings in London in advance of 9/11). Other countries publicly reported similar findings. *See e.g.*, Associated Press Worldstream, *Suspicion dispelled of insider trading in KLM shares before September 11 attacks* (reporting conclusion of Dutch government investigation that sharp drop in share prices of the national airline days before 9/11 were not caused by people who knew of terrorist attacks).

<sup>173</sup> The chief of the FBI team also raised the issue with CIA and asked it to be alert for any intelligence on illicit trading; he received no such reports from the CIA.

<sup>174</sup> Agence France Presse (Sept. 27, 2001).

trading in advance of 9/11 and that the case remained open pending new information. The spokesman said separate investigations by state authorities had also yielded no information and had been closed.<sup>175</sup>

Commission staff interviewed German law enforcement officials who said that exhaustive investigation in Germany revealed no evidence of illicit trading. Moreover, both SEC and FBI officials involved in the trading investigation told the Commission staff that German investigators had privately communicated to them that there was no evidence of illicit trading in Germany before 9/11. The FBI legal attaché in Berlin forwarded a lead to the German BKA (Bundeskriminalamt), which reported back that the trading allegations lacked merit. It appears, then, that Welteke's initial comments were simply ill-considered and unsupported by the evidence.<sup>176</sup>

### ***Other investigation corroborates the conclusion of no illicit trading***

Since 9/11, the U.S. government has developed extensive evidence about al Qaeda and the 9/11 attacks. The collected information includes voluminous documents and computers seized in raids in Afghanistan and throughout the world. Moreover, the United States and its allies have captured and interrogated hundreds of al Qaeda operatives and supporters, including the mastermind of the 9/11 plot and the three key plot facilitators. No information has been uncovered indicating that al Qaeda profited by trading securities in advance of 9/11. To the contrary, the evidence—including extensive materials reviewed by Commission staff—all leads to the conclusion that knowledge of the plot was closely held by the top al Qaeda leadership and the key planners. It strains credulity to believe that al Qaeda would have jeopardized its most important and secretive operation or any of its key personnel by trying to profit from securities speculation.

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<sup>175</sup> See Australian Financial Review (Dec 3, 2001).

<sup>176</sup> The SEC investigated trading of American Depositary Receipts (ADRs) in foreign companies. ADRs are receipts issued by a U.S. bank for the shares of a foreign corporation held by the bank. ADRs publicly trade on U.S. markets. This investigation revealed no illicit trading.